

ABSTRACT

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5 A mass spectrometer has an ion source for producing sample ions. The ions pass through an ion interface, to a reaction/collision cell section. An ion-neutral decoupling device is provided between the ion interface and the reaction/collision cell section, to provide substantial separation between ions and neutral particles, whereby only ions pass on to the reaction/collision cell section. The supersonic jet entering the spectrometer can have sufficient energy to cause the plasma gases, such as argon, to overcome the pressure differential between the

10 reaction/collision cell and an upstream section of the spectrometer so as to penetrate into the reaction/collision cell; the decoupling device prevents this. The decoupling device can have offset apertures provided by plates or rods or other comparable arrangements, or can comprise a quadrupolar electrostatic deflector, an electrostatic sector deflector or a magnetic sector deflector.

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